

Message Text

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SUBJECT: US PARTICIPATION AT 1974 PLOVDIV FAIR

REF: STATE 16229 AND 11962; SOFIA 0102 AND 1557 NOV. 15, 1973

VIENNA FOR EWTC AND REX

1. DURING MEETING WITH FIRST DEPUTY FOREIGN TRADE MINISTER LUKANOV, POSSIBLE US PARTICIPATION AT THE PLOVDIV FAIR WAS DISCUSSED WITH EMPHASIS ON SALES POSSIBILITY FOR ANY US EQUIPMENT DISPLAYED. BULGARIAN EMBASSY COMMERCIAL COUNSELOR KHRISTOV WAS ALSO PRESENT AT MEETING. SAID HE HAD RETURNED FROM NEW YORK JANUARY 30 FOR TWO WEEK STAY.

2. AFTER HEARING THAT USG IS NEAR DECISION ON US PARTICIPATION AT PLOVDIV FAIR AND AGRICULTURAL THEME MOST LIKELY, LUKANOV STATED REAL SATISFACTION. (AS AN ASIDE, SUGGESTED THAT USDA MIGHT MAKE REAL CONTRIBUTION AS SOURCE OF VISUALS ON ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND SEED TECHNOLOGY.) I NOTED SOME CONCERN ABOUT SALES POSSIBILITIES SINCE NO MARKET RESEARCH STUDY HAD BEEN MADE ON BULGARIAN MARKET AND ASKED ABOUT PROSPECTS. LUKANOV SAID ABSOLUTE GUARANTEES COULD NOT BE MADE AT

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THIS TIME BUT HE WAS NINETY PERCENT CERTAIN THAT MOST

IF NOT ALL OF THE EQUIPMENT COULD BE SOLD. OF COURSE, EQUIPMENT SHOULD BE LATEST MODEL. NOTED THAT THE AMOUNT OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE TO BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASES FROM NON-SOCIALIST COUNTRIES IS TO BE INCREASED CONSIDERABLY. I HAVE NO REASON TO DOUBT LUKANOV'S ESTIMATE OF SALES POSSIBILITIES.

3. LUKANOV PROMISED TO CONTACT MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND REQUEST A LIST OF AGRICULTURAL EQUIPMENT NEEDED AS WELL AS A LIST OF US FIRMS PRODUCING DESIRED EQUIPMENT. LIST WILL BE AVAILABLE IN TEN DAYS, HE SAID. ON ITEMS LISTED AND, IF EXHIBITED, PRO FORMAS COULD EVEN BE WRITTEN PRIOR TO SHIPMENT, HE ADDED.

4. OF COURSE, LUKANOV PUSHED FOR BIGGER EXHIBIT SPACE AND FIELD DEMONSTRATIONS WHICH ARE NOT BAD IDEAS BUT PERHAPS MORE THAN WE WANT. FMC DID PROMISE TO PUT ON FIELD DEMONSTRATION DURING FAIR.

5. IT IS EMBASSY PRACTICE TO ALERT US BUSINESSMEN TO THE IMPORTANCE OF PLOVDIV FAIR IN EYES OF BULGARS AND TO URGE THEM TO CONSIDER POSSIBILITY OF PARTICIPATING. FMC, JOHN DEERE, KAISER, AND IBM ALL HAVE MORE OR LESS AGREED TO PARTICIPATE. FOR OTHER POSSIBILITIES, SEE EMBASSY'S MONTHLY SERIES OF AIRGRAMS ON US BUSINESS ACTIVITY IN BULGARIA.
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